

Flooding from groundwater

Nailbourne and Little Stour

22 January 2013

Current situation

Despite starting 2012 in drought we had one of the wettest years on record. As a result groundwater levels in and around the rivers Nailbourne, Little Stour, Petham Bourne, and Alkham Bourne are high.

We have issued a groundwater Flood Alert for the Nailbourne and Little Stour. This is because we expect future rainfall will cause the groundwater to increase to a level where flooding of property is possible in some areas. Melting snow could further add to this.

Forecast risk of flooding

We use Flood Alerts to warn communities to be prepared when flooding is possible. Unlike flooding from rivers (fluvial flooding), groundwater flooding and its impact on property is difficult to predict. Groundwater levels rise and fall slowly, so it may take some time for flooding to occur but when it does it could last for several weeks.

The groundwater Flood Alert area is large and includes the villages from Lyminge along the river to Wickhambreaux.

The flow along the length of the Nailbourne and surrounding groundwater levels vary, which means the impact may differ depending on where you are.

Groundwater flooding could happen in the next few days and people with basements, cellars and low level garages are most at risk. There is also the possibility that groundwater could enter sewerage systems, causing waste water to 'back up' into properties.

If flows continue to rise in the Nailbourne and Little Stour we may also need to issue a fluvial Flood Alert for those areas at risk. Fluvial Flood Alert areas are smaller and therefore provide a more accurate warning of when flooding may occur.

What we're doing

- We are regularly monitoring the rising groundwater levels using specialist equipment and our staff are out on the ground, checking for signs of water above ground level.
- We are out everyday making sure the river channel is clear of obstructions. We have maintained the river channel throughout the year in preparation for situations like this. We also have stocks of sandbags ready to be used should the channel overflow.



- We are leading a multi agency response by working with our partners, Kent County Council, Canterbury City Council, Shepway District Council and the emergency services to prepare for any possible flooding.
- We are working with Southern Water Services to reduce the impact of overloaded sewers on people and the environment.
- We are sharing information and guidance with the Little Stour and Nailbourne River Management Group and the local parish councils to help local people be better prepared.

Actions and advice

- People concerned about groundwater flooding should contact our Floodline service on 0845 988 1188 or visit our website (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood>) to sign up to our free flood warning service.
- If you are at risk of flooding think about what you can move now. Consider moving personal items stored in your basement or on the ground floor, upstairs if possible.
- Think about who you could ask for help and who you could help too – particularly vulnerable neighbours or relatives.
- Check that pumps and any other flood protection equipment you have is working.
- Keep drains and gullies around your property free of debris.
- Prepare a flood plan to help you decide what practical actions to take before and during a flood, which will help reduce the damage flooding could cause. For guidance on how to do this and what to include visit:
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/38329.aspx>
- You should not lift manhole covers to drain groundwater as this will fill the sewerage systems with groundwater and reduce their capacity, increasing the risk of sewage pollution.
- Keep an eye on local water levels and weather conditions. You can also find groundwater levels on our website.

Next update

We will provide an update by 15 February or before if the situation changes significantly. We anticipate that groundwater levels may stay high for several weeks.

Further information

For information on groundwater levels and the latest water situation report visit:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/137320.aspx

You can also get practical advice on what to do before, during and after groundwater flooding on our website and in our Flooding from Groundwater booklet. You can download this here:

<https://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/ms/kpXMQ>

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Contacts

If you would like to know more about groundwater in the Little Stour and Nailbourne area, please contact the Environment Agency Customer Contact Centre.

Further useful contact numbers are shown below

- Floodline 0845 988 1188
- Environment Agency National Customer Contact Centre 03708 506 506
- Environment Agency Incident Reporting (to report groundwater flooding or pollution) 0800 80 70 60
- Southern Water Services 0845 278 0845
- Canterbury City Council 01227 862 000
- Kent County Council - Highways (to report drainage / groundwater) 08458 247 800
- Shepway District Council (Option 1 - Environmental Services) 01303 853 000

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